

HORIZONS

Office of Cerro Grande Fire Claims



Federal Emergency Management Agency

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CONTACT US!

HELPLINE:

1 888-748-1853

HOURS: 9 a.m.-6 p.m. M - F
9-12 Saturday

EMAIL:

cerrograndenewsletter@fema.gov

WEBSITE:

www.fema.gov/cerrogrande

PROBLEMS? CONTACT YOUR OMBUDSMAN--

Veronica Verde - 505-747-4204,
cell phone 505-934-9728 in
Espanola

Joseph Hesbrook - 505-424-5908,
cell phone 505-934-9699 in **Santa Clara and San Ildefonso Pueblos**

Dorothy Hamory - 505-661-3121,
cell phone 505-934-9719 in **Los Alamos, White Rock**

Bill Lehman - 505-661-3121, or
505-934-9698 For the Business
community in **Los Alamos and White Rock.**

Not Ready To Close Your Claim Within 180 Days? These Are Your Options!

Claimants are encouraged to sign a Proof of Loss not later than 150 days after filing the Notice of Loss. This allows 30 days for a Claims Reviewer to prepare a recommendation and the Authorized Official to render a decision. Regulations provide claimants with the option to reopen a closed claim for good cause, provided they have signed a Release and Certification.

Claimants may request an extension to sign the Proof of Loss, which will provide 90 additional days after the effective date of the Final Regulations.

Claimants who decline to sign the Proof of Loss may withdraw their Notice of Loss. They can re-file a Notice of Loss on or on or before August 28, 2002.

Consult with your Claims Reviewer to select the best option for you.

Don't Forget Our Information Booth at the Los Alamos Public Library on Saturday, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Fema audits DR-1329 for eligibility; Cerro Grande not affected

Cerro Grande fire victims should be aware that Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) auditors are conducting standard reviews of DR-1329 funds awarded to individuals and governments under the Stafford Act. As part of the audit, some residents are being asked to provide proof of citizenship.

FEMA officials stated that Stafford Act funds are separate from those of the Office of Cerro Grande Fire Claims (OCGFC). Under the Fire Assistance Act proof of citizenship, requests are not required.

Disaster funds are to help people get back on their feet after a presidential declaration, such as those provided for temporary housing. However, OCGFA funds are intended to compensate people as fully as possible for losses from the fire.

The Stafford Act audit will determine whether the applicant was eligible to apply based on citizenship status; whether the applicant received duplicate payments for a loss, such as insurance plus Stafford Act funds; and whether the damaged property was a primary residence.

"There is a 30-day waiting period after a person has applied and paid the premium before the policy is effective" said Erbach, "So residents should consider purchasing flood insurance now."

Futher information concerning NFIP may be obtained by calling your insurance agent or company, or call the NFIP's toll-free number at **1-800-611-6123, ext. 29.**

Mitigation Can Prevent Future Damage

A single undamaged home amid hundreds of destroyed residences after a Laguna Beach, California wild-fire was referred to as the "Miracle House." It was not a miracle, but a home with several significant safety measures to protect it against future fire hazards; a process called "mitigation."

The story of the "miracle house" is included in a documentary titled "Making Your Home Firewise," available in VHS for claimants under the Cerro Grande Fire Act, providing vital information on stone foundations, fireproof roofing materials, elevated decks and safer ways to landscape.

The Office of Cerro Grande Claims offers a mitigation program for fireproof construction, in addition to compensation for homes that were damaged or destroyed.

Mitigation funding provides up to 15 percent of the amount compensated for Cerro Grande fire related losses to the structure and land to provide a more fire resistant property.

An important difference between mitigation and compensation is that claimants may accept compensation and use the funds however and wherever they wish, whereas mitigation must be used only for approved measures on rebuilt or newly purchased homes within the four core counties.

Persons living within Los Alamos, Sandoval, Rio Arriba and Santa Fe counties and the Santa Clara and San Ildefonso pueblos are eligible for these funds. Claims may be filed outside these areas, but within the 12 declared counties, if a "heightened risk to structures or land" can be verified.

Two types of mitigation funding are available for "structural improvements"



A Los Alamos couple explores rebuilding options with Scott Roscoe, Mitigation Specialist, and Valerie Kooiker, Customer Service rep at the Information Booth held at the library on Saturday morning.

or "defensible space," the latter referring to areas between a structure and an oncoming wildfire.

Persons seeking mitigation assistance should obtain a Request for Mitigation Assistance and submit their proposals to FEMA prior to construction. If mitigation proposals exceed 15 percent of compensation, the claimants must cover additional costs.

To obtain a copy of "Making Your Home Firewise," or to discuss your mitigation plan with our experts, visit the Information Booth on Saturdays at the Los Alamos Public Library from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Printed on recycled paper



Payment Statistics

As of: 02/26/01

Payments Processed:

Individuals	\$24,847,035
Businesses	\$13,651,043
Not-For-Profit	\$ 89,063
State/County	\$ 6,038,261

Total Partial Payments: \$44,625,402

NOTICE

In connection with the Cerro Grande Fire Assistance Act, the Office of the Inspector General (OIG), an arm of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), reminds claimants that OIG is responsible for auditing and investigating claims and under the Act. Persons making false claims can be charged with a felony and, if convicted, face a maximum five- to 10- year prison term, and/or up to \$250,000 in fines

You May Be Eligible For Federal Funds---

The following are expenses that may be eligible for reimbursement due to the fire.

Evacuation expenses such as:

- Hotel or motel accommodations
- Mileage
- Phone calls
- Meals
- Clothing
- Laundry and dry cleaning
- Pets
- Livestock

Or, other expenses such as:

- Food loss
- Insurance deductible
- Underinsured losses
- Flood insurance
- Lost wages
- Medical
- Smoke damage
- Trees/landscaping/garden
- Structures
- Mitigation
- Cleanup labor
- Firewood
- Business losses
- Personal injury
- Other financial losses
- Real and personal property

If you believe you are eligible, visit a Customer Service Center. A Notice of Loss form is available on the FEMA website and may be mailed to the Office of Cerro Grande Fire Claims.